



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
ONE ASHBURTON PLACE, ROOM 2101  
BOSTON, MA 02108

## **FY2021 Urban Agenda Grant Program**

### **Request for Proposals (RFP)** Program Guidelines and Application

*(Contracting of grant awards subject to state budget appropriation.)*

Open Date: **November 16, 2020**

Bidder's Conference Call: **November 30, 2020 @ 9:00 a.m.**

Application Deadline: **Friday, December 18, 2020 @ 5:00 p.m.**

Questions: [eoheadgrants@mass.gov](mailto:eoheadgrants@mass.gov)

## What's new in FY2021

In December 2019, the Baker-Polito Administration released a new economic development plan for the state entitled: [Partnerships for Growth: A plan to enable the Commonwealth's regions to build, connect and lead](#). The plan aligns the administration's economic development programs, funding, and legislative efforts within four central pillars – Respond to the Housing Crisis, Build Vibrant Communities, Support Business Competitiveness, and Train a Skilled Workforce – to address challenges and foster opportunities over the next four years. Across all the pillars, the plan outlines a set of underlying principles that include promoting regional strategies and equitable opportunity. The Urban Agenda Grant Program is one of the state's most important tools to partner with community organization to pursue these opportunities.

This year, with the unprecedented and far-reaching impact of the global pandemic, the program is seeking proposals that are intended to develop and implement Covid-19 economic recovery efforts. Applications should describe the most significant challenges faced by the community and the collaborative approaches that will be pursued to address them. **Given the urgent community need through the winter and spring, EOHED will only make awards to projects that can be implemented, completed, and fully expended by June 30, 2021.**

EOHED will again prioritize funding to projects that align with the recommendations outlined in the 2018 reports issued by the Governor's Black Advisory and Latino Advisory Commissions. Applicants are encouraged to build or enhance collaborations that include Black and Latino businesses, workers, and/or youth, strive to strengthen neighborhoods, and expand opportunities in ways that drive diversity and inclusiveness. This is particularly important due to the pandemic's disproportionate impact on low-income and minority communities.

Please note that the state does not yet have a final budget for FY2021. Therefore, this RFP is issued with the caveat that the contracting of any awards will be subject to appropriation.

### A. INTRODUCTION

The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) is pleased to announce the availability of funds for the FY2021 round of the Urban Agenda Grant Program. The program is seeking proposals from eligible municipalities for projects that entail community-driven responses to community-defined economic opportunities, and that build leadership, collaboration, and capacity at the local level.

The Baker-Polito Administration recognizes that urban centers face unique economic and quality of life challenges, and that the path to success lies in tapping into the unique local assets that they already possess, rather than in one-size-fits-all directives from government. The Administration's Urban Agenda is focused on supporting economic vitality and cultivating stronger urban neighborhoods across the entire Commonwealth.

The Urban Agenda program offers grant funding, on a competitive basis, to local partnerships in selected urban communities, to implement projects that are based on creative collaborative work models with the goal advancing and achieving economic progress. Given the unprecedented global pandemic that has affected all communities, the program is primarily seeking proposals that are designed to address and implement strategies for economic recovery.

## B. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

<b>Maximum Award*</b>	\$100,000
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	\$2,500,000 (Subject to state budget appropriation)
<b>Grant use</b>	General operating support for innovative and collaborative community economic development projects.
<b>Project Duration</b>	Project must be completed and fully expended no later than June 30, 2021
<b>Project focus examples</b>	Supporting workers returning to work Supporting small businesses access to resources Coaching or Mentorship for day care providers Development and training support for women-, veteran-, and/or minority-owned businesses
<b>Eligible communities</b>	Urban municipalities that meet certain household income benchmarks (median household income less than 90 percent of the state's average income). See list below.
<b>Eligible lead applicant</b>	Municipality or a Community-Based Organization
<b>Eligible project partners</b>	Municipality, Community-Based Organizations, Schools, Local Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, Private Sector Partners, Neighborhood Associations, etc.
<b>Review criteria</b>	Proven Track Record Clarity of Vision - Alignment with Community Goals Strength of Community Partnerships Defined Target Population and Economic Need Demonstrated Significance of Economic Opportunity Capacity to Execute and Succeed  Projects focused on COVID-19 recovery efforts as well as support Black and Latino communities will be prioritized.
<b>Application Opens</b>	Monday, November 16, 2020
<b>Informational Webinar</b>	Monday, November 30, 2020, @ 9:00 am
<b>Application deadline</b>	Friday, December 18, 2020, 5:00pm
<b>Awards Notification / Contract Start</b>	January-February 2021

## C. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

This program is designed to support community economic development that is grounded in collaboration and local leadership development. Applications must be spearheaded by the eligible municipality in partnership with a main community organization, one of which shall act as the lead applicant. The CEO of both the municipality and the main community partner must provide a letter of support outlining their respective commitment(s) for the project.

The following urban communities, which meet certain household income benchmarks (median household income less than 90 percent of the state's average income) are eligible to apply. EOHED intends for the grant program to serve both Gateway and non-Gateway cities, of varying sizes.

Eligible Municipalities			
Amesbury	Fitchburg	Methuen	Somerville
Amherst	Framingham	Milford	Southbridge
Attleboro	Gardner	New Bedford	Springfield
Barnstable	Gloucester	Newburyport	Taunton
Beverly	Greenfield	North Adams	Waltham
Boston	Haverhill	Northampton	Webster
Brockton	Holyoke	Norwood	West Springfield
Cambridge	Lawrence	Peabody	Westfield
Chelsea	Leominster	Pittsfield	Winthrop
Chicopee	Lowell	Provincetown	Woburn
Clinton	Lynn	Quincy	Worcester
Easthampton	Malden	Revere	
Everett	Marlborough	Salem	
Fall River	Medford	Somerset	

## D. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

The program will consider applications from communities that have established coalitions and/or collaborations that have a track record of working together on addressing community challenges.

Each eligible community may only submit one application to the program, except for cities with a population over 150,000. In those cases, the city may submit either one citywide proposal or multiple "neighborhood" proposals (no more than one application per clearly defined geographical neighborhood).

Applicants must base their project proposals on locally significant economic opportunities. In this round, priority will be given to community collaborations that propose to develop and/or implement strategies for pandemic economic recovery. The key is that the project be in direct response to a community identified need. Specifically, grant applications will be reviewed and scored (100-points scale) on the following criteria:

Applicant and Coalition's Track Record (10 points)

- Evidence of the applicant's experience in community economic development.
- Evidence of the partnership's history, experience, and past successes.

Vision and Goals (10 points)

- Description of the neighborhood, economic, and social context in which proposed project will operate, in order to place the work within a broader urban framework.
- Clear articulation of the vision and goals of the project. Consistency with host community's larger strategic vision and aspirations.
- If applicable, how the project responds to Covid recovery efforts and/or aligns with one or more of the recommendations from the Black and/or Latino Advisory Commissions.

Community Collaboration and Partnerships (20 points)

- Description of the existing community coalition or collaboration with thoughtful and intentional assemblage of partners.
- Demonstration of direct community and institutional support.
- Innovation of the collaboration: leveraging existing strengths and developing new local capacity and leadership.

Target Population (10 points)

- Description of the target population (and neighborhood) that will benefit from project.
- Description of how members of target population have been engaged in the project.
- Projects that target Black and Latino populations will be prioritized.

Economic Opportunity – Project Plan (40 points)

- Articulation of the identified needs of the population that the project will address.
- Description of the economic opportunity that will be leveraged by this project, and how the project activities directly respond to the opportunity.
- If applicable, description of how project supports the economic advancement of Black and Latino communities.
- If applicable, the projects that address the economic recovery of the community from the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Capacity to Succeed (10 points)

- Clear and appropriate project timeline outlining key benchmarks. Specific outline of the project activities and anticipated outcomes.
- Detailed budget, including total project budget, allocation of the requested grant funds, and reasonable overhead costs.

*Note: For projects focused on workforce development and/or training, the project plan must reflect alignment with the municipality's corresponding Regional Labor Market Blueprint, and/or outline changes in priority sectors due to the pandemic. In all cases, applicant should describe consultations and/or coordination with MassHire partners.*

Examples of projects that may receive favorable reviews *(for illustrative purposes only)*: technical assistance and/or coaching to minority business owners on accessing state/federal assistance; workshops/webinars to help parents improve home-schooling skills; planning support for providers to develop/implement safe practices to resume training services; creation of community coalition to support low-income families facing evictions; etc.

## **E. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUBMISSION GUIDANCE**

1. Application materials are available online at [www.mass.gov/hed](http://www.mass.gov/hed).
2. EOHED staff will be unable to answer any individual questions while the application period is open. Questions must be emailed to [EOHEDgrants@mass.gov](mailto:EOHEDgrants@mass.gov). They will be aggregated and responses will be posted on the EOHED webpage.
3. EOHED will host one informational webinar for prospective applicants on **Monday, November 30, 2020 @ 9:00 AM**. Participation is optional and registration is not required. Instructions and the webinar link will be posted on the program webpage.
4. **Proposals are due by 5:00 PM on Friday, December 18, 2020.**
5. A completed proposal packet must be submitted to EOHED by the deadline via email to [EOHEDgrants@mass.gov](mailto:EOHEDgrants@mass.gov). Fax copies of the application will not be accepted.
6. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is received on time by EOHED. All applications will be logged as to date and time received and kept on file as public record. Late submissions will not be considered.
7. EOHED reserves the right to request additional information from the applicant or external sources as may be necessary in order to complete the application review.
8. All applicants will be notified in writing about grant decision in January, 2021. Grant awards, subject to state budget appropriation, will be contracted shortly after.

A complete proposal packet includes the following pages/components:

- **Cover Page** (1 page)
- **Proposal Narrative** (not to exceed 7 pages), and
- **Budget Form** (1 page)
- **Lead Support Letters** (one letter each from Municipality and Main Community Partner)

All sections must be completed per the instructions. **Complete packet must be submitted as one document (MSWord or PDF)** with a filename that includes the City/Town name.

**Optional Attachments:** Additional attachments are not required. However, other support letters from community partners that will be actively involved in the project, may be submitted. The letters should reference the role that the writer will be playing with the project. Please note that while these additional attachments may be viewed and filed with the application, they will not be scored or otherwise counted as part of the evaluation of the proposal.